Nature Lovers Poems

Amos K. Merl

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The Grand Old Woods

Nature Lovers' Poems

By

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To
Elsie M. and J. Wayne
My Children

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INTRODUCTION

Every lover of the out-of-doors is conscious of the feeling of companionship in the open. Is there any finer companionship in life than that of the beech, the oak, the maple and their fellow trees—any sweeter breath in life than that of new mown grass or any milder melody than that of the singing pines? When we have lost these friends for a time—perhaps after months of life in the city—we know what restorers of life they are. We taste the full joys of their companionship when, after long absence, we return to Nature and renew our allegiance to the growing things of the earth.

The city is a most lonely place; one may travel for hours and not see a familiar face, while in the woods or in the fields, by the river, on the steep mountain-side or by the ever restless sea, there are always faces, bright eyes, laughing voices and friends.

The voices of the trees and the grass like that of old time friends, are filled with echoes of the past. They stir our hearts

with memories of years of fresh, dewy mornings in the springtime of life, when our spirits soared to the sky with the lark; of summer moons when, resting on the fragrant soil, we listened to the gentle voices of the night and dreamed the long, long dreams of youth. Byron well expresses the idea thus:

> There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is a society where none intrudes
> By the deep sea, and music in its roar,
> I love not man the less but Nature more.

Amidst the crash and chaos of the temples man has reared the purposes of God move on, and nature, His great handiwork is undisturbed by the puny struggles of the human race. Men may come and go, kings hold the scepter and depart, armies fight and pass to dust, nations rise and fall, but Nature—the work of God remains.

Let him whose faith is shaken by the greed and selfishness of men, seek the solace of Nature, for there, before the works of God, he will see things truly. He who loves Nature is near God.

A. K. M.

WHEN HEARTS FORGET

When hearts forget and silver threads
  Commingle with the brown or gold,
When we no more may lightly tread
  The path of youth we did of old,
'Tis not familiar sight or sound
  That makes us most to memory yield,
But rather some rare scent re-found,
  Of Autumn fires in fen or field.

'Tis not some song or sweet refrain,
  Nor whisper of the winds that pass
That start the idle tears again,
  But rather scent of burning grass
Along some lonely country road;
  'Tis this that takes us back again
To when we knew not of the load
  Of weary cares and mental strain.

Old loves, old days, come back again,
  And echoes of the past float down
The long, long way, until we fain
  Would dwell beyond the lights of town;
Dwell where the vine clings to the wall,
  And silent shadows come and go,
Where oft we heard the plaintive call
  Of cooing dove when sun went low.

These ope the gates to Yesterday,
But Time bids we may only look
Where Memory points far down the way,
To cottage home in shady nook,
Where spreads a glory over all,
That wealth and fashion can not show,
From whence we often hear the call
Of Youth, but know we cannot go.

APRIL SHOWERS

The dainty buds are swelling,
While whisp'ring winds are telling
Of mystic life low dwelling
  Where wait the lovely flowers.
The grasses too are sleeping
Safe in the warm earth's keeping,
But soon they will come peeping,
  Lured forth by April showers.

O, welcome, April showers,
That bring the dainty flowers,
And weave the leafy bowers
  Where nesting birds are calling.
A few more days to follow,
Then we shall see the swallow
Skim over hill and hollow,
  From dawn to twilight's falling.

The merry brook comes bending
Around the rocks, descending
Until it finds its ending
  Within the rushing river.
We love the wood's wild chorus,
When April skies hang o'er us,
And sunshine spreads before us
  And praise the Bounteous Giver.

THERE IS NO DEATH

Long ages gone some mighty power
  Upheaved the Rockies and Cascades,
Raised high Gibraltar's beacon tower,
  And Hudson's rock-ribbed Palisades;
Such mighty forces active then,
Nor touched by greatest skill of men,
Reveal to those who care to see,
The language of all history,
"There is a God."

'Tis near the hour of midnight gloom,
  A hurricane sweeps o'er the sea,
No moon, nor stars the sky illume,
  The night is dark as dark can be.
The angry waves leap mountain high,
Make compact with the angry sky,
The thunder-peals roll loud and long,
'Till echoes sound the crags along,
"There is a God."

With fearful plunge the rushing tide
  Leaps down to awful depths below,
Where dreadful chasms open wide
  Receiving there the endless flow.
The echo of the water's fall
Reverberates from wall to wall,
Proclaiming to the passing throng
That moves in wonderment along,
"There is a God."

Each dawn unfurls another day
And drives the rolling mist away.

In silences of midnight hour,
When all the world is slumbering,
And twinkling stars adorn God's bower,
Stars far beyond our numbering,
I stand upon the river's brink,
And in amazement gaze and think
Of all the truth that's written there,
The touch of mystery everywhere,
"There is a God."

The morning breeze sings soft and low,
A strain made of celestial parts,
And wafts Creation's poem, though
'Tis heard by only listening hearts.
Each dawn unfurls another day
And drives the rolling mists away,
Each rising sun brings life and light,
And whispers to departing night,
"There is no death."

THE VANITY OF WEALTH

On yonder hill the rich man lives,
Nearby the ocean wave;
To needy poor he never gives,
No want he tries to save.
He builds his castle where he wills,
Beside some babbling brook,
Or on the sloping side of hill,
Or some secluded nook.

His gilded dome reflects the light
Of sun or moon or star,
To seaward he commands a sight
Of trackless ocean far;
Far as the human eye can see
The billows onward roll,
Across the wild and stormy sea
Just like his restless soul.

His faithful servants live below
In hut or humble cot,
At his command they come and go,
To toil, is their lot.
They know no joys, but weary, wan,
They only know to wait
Until the great eternal dawn,
When wide will swing the gate.

Those castle gates may bar the poor,
And guard the rich man's gold,
But they will never be secure
Against a phantom old
That any day or night may call
And bid him ope the door,
And then to follow, leaving all,
To hence return no more.

THE PASSING VETERANS

Some fifty years have drifted by
Since shrilly whistled shot and shell,
When fearless men marched forth to die,
On field of foe, where thousands fell.

Full long and wild the conflict raged,
The Nation's heart was stirred with awe
While in the deadly strife engaged
To save our country and its law.

Where swept the surge of human tide,
In answer to the country's call,
They marched and fought and bravely died
'Neath shadows hanging like a pall.

Then came the dawn of brighter day,
When silent was the bugle's call,
When war clouds lifting, rolled away,
And peace again reigned over all.

And as the surge of time rolls on,
They still keep falling, one by one,
Cares laid aside, they soon are gone,
Life's battle fought, the vict'ry won.

Now few of them are left, and they
  Soon all will sleep beneath the sod,
Will follow on where leads the way
  To everlasting peace and God.

Pay tribute, then, where tribute's due,
  To heroes brave who've gone before,
And the surviving veterans few,
  Who soon will cross to that far shore.

MEDITATIONS UPON A SKULL

What high reflections once took place
Within the shadow of this space?
What thoughts have had their origin
This dusky hollow room within?

Was it a master or a sage,
A noted ruler of the age?
Were they vast musings multiplied,
That wisdom scattered far and wide?

Have they swayed empire or swayed state,
And sat in council with the great,
Or only ruled a modest home
In cottage near the ocean's foam?

Many sights and visions fair,
Have flashed upon the mirrors there,
Of mountains high or prairies wide,
Of rosy tints at eventide.

O, the dreams that were that wandered
here
Of youth and home and maiden dear,
Of moonlight strolls among the trees,
And music of the rustling leaves!

CHARMING DAYS

Springtime has its mellow days,
  Its swiftly flowing streams
That rush adown the winding ways,
  Where bright the sunshine gleams;
Its rains come gently down,
On fields and hillside brown,
  Yet frost may chill
  While bluebirds trill,
Some days be dark, and frown.

Summer brings its golden haze,
  Its flowers sweet and fair,
Strewn all along the wooded ways,
  In rich profusion there:
And fields of waving grain
Spread o'er a wide domain,
  And the sun beats down
  On field and town
Till Autumn comes again.

Autumn has its yellow corn,
  Its dim blue hazy hills,
It has its fair September morn,
  That rare perfume distills
From fallen Autumn leaves;
Then dim October weaves
  Its haze of blue
  Till frost and dew
Make keen and cool the eves.

Winter robes the earth in snow,
Sometimes a silver thaw
Will in the glinting sunlight glow
And thrill our souls with awe,
Then storms again rage wild,
Where once the sunshine smiled,
And clouds hang low
Above the snow
That on the ground is piled.

Indian Summer days excel
All others of the year,
Hazy hills—I love them well—
And meadows brown and sere,
The mellow days like Spring,
A few birds lingering;
Rich painted woods,
Sweet solitudes,
And all the charms they bring.

The glinting sunrays low descend
And crown Old Baldy's snowy crest.

SAN GABRIEL

I love the evening twlight clear,
The fading of departing day,
When bars of mellow light appear
Beyond the hilltops far away—
When length'ning shadows slowly creep
O'er quiet ranch and orange trees,
When stars o'erhead wake up from sleep,
And softly comes the evening breeze.

Alone I sit and silent dream,
Beneath the giant redwood tree,
I ponder things of life that seem,
And weight the cares of life that be.
Beneath the emerald drapery
There breaks upon my silent mood,
A note fine spun with witchery—
The throstle piping to her brood.

As thus I dreaming sit and bend
To catch the music of my guest,
The glinting sunrays low descend
And crown Old Baldy's snowy crest;
My drooping eyelids slowly close
The windows of my weary soul,
And peace enfolds me, brings repose,
Until I glimpse the higher goal.

Far down below a valley fine
Stretches away beyond the view,
Orchard and flowers, and bright sunshine,
Beneath a cloudless Southern blue—
San Gabriel rises, spreading far
Out to the swinging, sweeping tide,
The sunset gates seem held ajar
As tribute to San Gabriel's pride.

AN EVENING REVERY

I hear a robin singing
Where silent waters flow,
On topmost twig he's swinging
Against the sunset's glow.

The violets are blooming,
In spots of purple hue,
Beneath the trees uplooming
Toward heaven's sapphire blue.

A gentle breeze is blowing,
As soft as velvet down,
And rose-hued clouds are glowing
Where late the sun went down.

I sit and dream and ponder,
While shadows longer grow,
Yes, dreaming sit and wonder
What lies beyond the glow!

I sense a rare perfuming
Flung on the evening air
From nearby tree that's blooming
Like blushing maiden fair.

I hear an echo drifting
From far-off days of yore,
As memory's veil is lifting
From time that is no more.

TO AN IDEAL WOMAN

There's a matchless beauty in sweet-scented June,
When the rose bush bends with its burden low,
And the mellow light of the silvery moon
Comes softly stealing to earth below.

There is beauty in Nature, yes, everywhere,
But of all this splendor nothing vies.
With thy innocent smile, and the sunny air
Playing about thy lovely eyes.

There's a melody sung by the sounding sea,
And the tremulous wind as it moans and sighs
Through the rustling leaves of some lonely tree,
Or the pattering rain when daylight dies.

A marvelous blend of music I hear,
But none is so rich and tuneful to me
As the sound that falls on my listening ear
Of kind words said by the voice of thee.

There's beauty of form and there's majesty
In the bow of promise and twinkling star,
In the eternal swell of the heaving sea,
And the dome of heaven, deep blue and far.

There's dainty form in each flake of snow,
But no shape of earth is in such beauty dressed
As that which Nature has made us know
By her rarest art in thy form expressed.

Thy faultless beauty, the light of thy face,
Thy low kind words and the voice of thee,
Thy nature serene and womanly grace,
Are the light and the hope of eternity.

A SUMMER SHOWER

The noonday sun beats fiercely down
  Upon the meadow, field and fen,
The butterfly flits lightly by,
  Gath'ring nectar down the glen;
O'er meadow sweet and clover field,
  Wander and drone the bumblebees,
The birds seek shelter from the heat,
  Among the leaves of shady trees.

All earth a solemn silence holds,
  Scarce stirs a blade of corn or cane,
Nor trembling leaf nor bough of tree;
  The billows of the fields of grain
Have ceased to roll, have gone to sleep,
  The mirrored lake reflects the trees,
And moves not pebble on the beach,
  The wind and waves are both at ease.

Low in the west a cloud appears,
  Near the horizon it's afloat,
Springs up a gentle western breeze,
  A whisper from the winds remote.
Clouds, sentinel-like, go scudding by,
  Now darker ones enveil the sun,
With swifter pace they sail above,
  While deeper shadows onward come.

Hunters survey the heavens above,
Then shelter seek at cabin door,
Fisherman view askance the clouds,
And turn their prows to leeward shore;
The birds retreat among the trees
To 'scape the wind and coming rain,
And restless cattle wander near
The low gate of the long green lane.

A mighty rush and roar of wind
Is moving swiftly on ahead,
A flash, a crash, a deaf'ning sound,
Adown the oak the lightning's sped.
Flaming swords cleave darkness through,
Heaven's artillery thundering roars,
Dark clouds hide the peerless blue,
And on the earth a deluge pours.

Now gentle rain comes pattering down,
And faster comes, and faster still,
Comes slanting through the leafy trees
And beating on the fields and hill.
Gleams the lightning's vivid flash,
Darting here, there, everywhere,
Reverberating thunder peal
Follows the wonderous flame-like glare.

Again the rain is past and gone,
Unfurls the west a banner blue,
While sun in silver puddles shines,
And all the earth again is new.
On yonder passing cloud appears
Elusive bow of promise fair,
The storm is fast receding east,
Leaving a cool breath everywhere.

The sun has passed beyond the hills,
The shades of night are coming on,
The radiant bow has vanished quite,
With setting sun it now has gone.
The lightning plays midst cloudy peaks,
Far to the north, southwest and lee,
Flashing among the misty crags
Like signals sent far out at sea.

OCTOBER LEAVES

See yonder sea of color gleaming,
A dazzling sweep of forest beaming,
A painted tapestry of wood
Proclaiming Nature's ardent mood.

A vast expanse of red and gold,
A wealth of riches to behold,
A grandeur of funereal thrall
That Autumn on the pyre lets fall.

Each branch and twig of bright attire,
Adds to the hilltops' crimson fire,
The sunshine streams in yellow tide
Through Autumn leaves and branches wide.

The wind folds down to whisper dreams,
And hardly stirs the little streams,
The sky o'erhead of sapphire blue
Holds light of rarest gem-like hue.

This picture rare each year is hung,
'Gainst rare, rich mantle Autumn-flung;
It tells of life and death once more,
Of death in life, of harvests o'er.

THE LONESOME PINE

Why stand you alone
Against the sky line,
Far up on yon height,
O brave, lonesome pine.

Your foothold the rocks,
Where firmly you cling,
Defying the storms
From Autumn to Spring.

How often you've fought
The wind and the snow,
While others were safe
In valley below.

You sing and you sigh,
But not to be heard,
For no one is near,
Not even a bird.

You rant and you rave
At the tempest at night;
When Winter winds come
With furies you fight.

The first in the morn
To welcome the sun,
The last to behold it
When daylight is done.

Sing on, lonesome pine,
Though no one be near,
Thy song is not vain,
The muses will hear!

THE GUARD AT LINDENWOOD

The old elm sentinel-like has stood
Long guarding the gates of Lindenwood,
Saying to all who venture near:
"All are equal who pass in here.

"No rank nor class of any grade,
Can pass beneath my solemn shade;
The rich and poor who here go by
All, all are equal where they lie.

"Winds from the South will softly call,
Spreading a carpet green o'er all,
But as they pass they murmur low:
'All are equal who sleep below.'

"June flowers bloom for all the same,
Be they lowly or had they fame,
And softly breathes each tender leaf:
'All are equal who sleep beneath.'

"Then comes the dismal Autumn rain,
Beating its sad and low refrain:
'The proud lie low, their race is run,
All men are equal 'neath God's sun.'

"Winter comes with snow and sleet,
Spreading its great white winding sheet,
And passes on with mournful sigh:
'I cover them all, the low and the high.'

"Great marble shafts may pierce the sky
Near where the unmarked lowly lie,
The elements sing on and say:
'All, all are equal, these but clay.' "

GOD'S TRAIL

God's pathway, see,
Out on the deep,
Where the wild waves
Eternally sweep.

Deep in the woods
Silence is awe,
Nothing but God's
Immutable law.

A melody, hark!
Up in the hills,
'Tis but His voice
There in the rills.

Flowers and grass
Come at His call,
When He commands
Death reaps them all.

The strongest oak
Snaps like a reed,
When 'tis assailed
By hurricane's speed.

The gleam of His sword
Cleaving the sky,
Illumines the way
When he rides by.

Splendor we see
Where'er we go,
In Summer flowers,
In beautiful snow.

A planet He flings
Into space far,
Changes it then
To twinkling star.

Over the earth,
Far into space,
His plainly marked
Trail we can trace.

THE MOUNTAIN LAKE

Far up among the pine-clad hills,
Beyond the haunts of men,
Where evermore the sparkling rills
Come rushing down the glen,
A lonely lake lies dreaming on,
Serene beneath the sun,
Or cloudy sky, from early dawn
Until the day is done.

In bold relief against the sky
Loom spirits of the height,
Whose noble peaks point heaven high,
Where eagles wing their flight.
The pine-clad hills reposing nigh,
Are mirrored in the lake,
Where crystal waters gleaming lie
Within the circling brake.

The snow white lilies seem to sleep
Upon the silvery sheen,
Where only gnomes their vigil keep,
Where man has seldom been.
No boat has ever cut the sand
Beneath o'erhanging trees,
Where wavelets lap the lonely strand,
When touched by stealthy breeze.

A lonely lake lies dreaming on
Serene beneath the sun.

An almost prayerful silence blends
With whispers near the spot,
And woodland solitude extends
Where ages are forgot.
The shady, wooded aisles are mute
And silent everywhere,
Save as they touch the poet's lute
To play a plaintive air.

When soft light from the moon so fair,
And quick winds stir the lake,
A thousand eyes are watching there
To keep the woods awake.
When both the stars and moon are gone,
And clouds blot out the light,
The lonely lake lies dreaming on
Through shadows of the night.

TRUE HAPPINESS

If you would find true happiness
  Seek for it not in gilded halls
Amid the scenes of worldliness,
  Go, rather, where the wild bird calls
You, down along the forest aisles
Where Nature on you kindly smiles.

Look for it on some eminence
  Out by the ever restless sea,
There find abundant recompense,
  For all that's been and is to be;
Go where the foaming billows roar
Unceasingly along the shore.

And you may find it on the plains,
  The treeless, rolling plains of old,
Whose passing mem'ry still remains
  A joy more treasured than pure gold;
The same breeze there forever flows,
The same sky often turns to rose.

Forget the strife and eager rush,
  The avarice for gold or gain,
Where men each other seek to crush
  For riches that are all in vain;
Dream rather of the country-side,
Far from the rush of human tide.

What need you care if markets rise
Or fall, and other things go wrong,
To you belong the peerless skies,
The breezes, and the birds' sweet song;
Contented be in life's short span
And pity have for poor Rich Man.

The world has other wealth than gold,
Abundant wealth that all may share,
Vast treasures never bought nor sold,
Though freely scattered everywhere;
Accept them, and to your surprise,
You'll find this world a Paradise.

THE MELANCHOLY CRANE

Down where the snowy lilies hide
Upon the slowly creeping stream,
Where mirrored waters gently glide,
And suiting well the recluse's dream,
Like some fixed statue there he stood,
In dreary wilderness alone,
No friends had he in marsh or wood,
Where oft he heard the sad winds moan.

Sometimes a purple, shaggy sky
Would blot the friendly heavens out,
And gusts of angry winds come by
As if to put the fowl to rout.
When dismal rains in torrents fell
And nights were dark as ebony,
Full dreary then that lonely dell,
Where once he lived in ecstasy.

When softer winds and sunshine came,
Like sifted swansdown, idly by,
When sunset skies were all aflame,
He still would only sadly sigh;
For what to him the fading sun
Beneath a glorious crimson sky,
When one day more its course had run,
And shades of night were drawing nigh.

Some years gone by his faithful mate
Had sacrificed her loyal life,
And since that time he'd come to hate
Man, who's forever seeking strife.
Some wretch, with murder in his eye,
That he might prate about his skill,
Ordained that she must that day die
To satisfy his ruthless will.

When calmly sailing through the air,
Above the world and wild morass,
He merely seemed a spectre there,
Like cloud-cast shadow on the grass.
As shifts the sun from shade to light,
Then swings again to darker shade,
So swung he in his solemn flight,
Above the world, adown the glade.

The noisy blackbirds flew round him,
When passing to the farther shore,
A kingfisher, on a blasted limb,
Was scolding him forevermore.
Like haunted spirits, swallow flew
About him, circling where he stood,
Then sailed far upward, through the blue,
Away beyond the marsh and wood.

Way down where shining minnows gleam,
And water bugs their trac'ry spin,
Upon the slowly moving stream,
Far from the city's clamorous din,
Where gay and gaudy butterflies,
Above the sun-flecked waters roam
And lightly float, for years gone by,
The lonely heron made his home.

The snowy lilies hardly stirred
Or rocked beneath o'er-hanging trees,
Scarce moved a turtle when the bird
Came dropping down with quiet ease
Through leafy tree-tops standing near
His home, upon that lonely shore;
All there was silent, gloomy, drear,
Harsh and wilderness, nothing more.

When Autumn winds came down the lake,
Another huntsman came that way,
With caution he crept through the brake,
Bent on the harmless crane to slay.
The bird spread wide his wings and rose
Above the reeds. A puff of blue,
His peaceful life came to a close,
There near the only home he knew.

O'er all that wide expanse of grass,
A death-like silence reigns supreme,
Now winds and sun and shadows pass,
Just like a dream o'er marsh and stream.
No more will know the lonely lake
(Where wildness only hence shall reign)
The haunting spirit of the brake,
The blue form of the lonely crane.

WINTER WOODS

The forest trees are bare and brown,
With here and there a clinging leaf,
The tiger-lilies bend them down,
With violets they've come to grief;
The promise and anemone
Are dreams of summers yet to be.

Below the shield of ice and snow
The little brook still rushes on,
Though cold the water there below,
It sings of sunny days now gone,
It murmurs a soft melody
As on it hurries to the sea.

The slanting light comes sifting through
The interlacing branches high,
A scream, a gleam, a streak of blue,
A scolding jay-bird flashes by;
The saucy red-wing's flaming flight
Flares just above the carpet white.

There's beauty in the winter woods,
And music in the lilt of streams,
Though Nature shows her wilder moods,
And land is traced in icy dreams.
There's beauty when the skies are gray,
As well as any other day.

A DREAM OF SPRING

My thoughts are of the Spring,
When rain comes dashing down
Against my window pane,
As musing there I gaze upon
The slanting, driving floods
That come in gusts, then pass
On down, across the field beyond.
The sun bursts through a silver cloud
And lights my heart to dreaming of
The myriad unborn tender flowers
In wood-lot and in verdant field,
And down along the winding brook.
I dream of scented lilac sprays,
And apple blossoms gladdening
Some sunny hillside by the way,
Where swallows swiftly glide
Like spirits through the air.
Across the field I seem to hear
The piping of a quail,
His prophecies of rain.
My vision paints a gorgeous scene
Of emerald against the blue,
A landscape stretching far
To meet the bending sky;
Behold, the Spring has come!

A FEW MORE DAYS

O see yon sea of glory gleaming
Through veil of hazy atmosphere,
And listen to the saucy screaming
Of that braggart jaybird near.

The other birds have now forsaken
Nesting haunts and Southward gone,
At mystic warning all have taken
Wing before the early dawn.

Comes again the silent reaper,
Harvesting the woodland gold,
The flaming red of vine and creeper,
Changing them to dust and mould.

And lazy rivers now are creeping
Without singing down the vales,
And weary winds seem almost sleeping,
Soon to wake to wilder gales.

The hazy heavens o'er us bending,
Solemn, silent and serene,
Make us think the sky's descending
Low to blend with Summer's green.

A few more days of golden glory
Ere the darker shadows fall,
A few more days ere Winter hoary
Spreads his mantle over all.

HAMMER PLATE

The Mountain Stream

THE STREAM

Sparkling and clear the mountain stream
Leaps down to the pool where shadows dream,
Then hurries onward and down the steep,
O'er stony beds, through gorges deep.

It lends the power that drives the wheel
Of the iron horse and the spinner's reel,
Its slender threads give power and might,
And turn the darkness into light.

Slipping from toil in silv'ry sheen,
Through forest keeps and meadows green,
It slowly creeps then spreads more wide
To blend at last with the ocean tide.

* * * * * *

The Stream of Life leaps wide and free,
Through dreamy youth, through childhood's glee,
Then hurries on to sterner life,
Down rugged gorge of toil and strife.

It bears us on past worldly gain,
Past honors void and glories vain;
Nor wealth nor gold nor song nor rhyme
Can stay the onward rush of time.

When comes life's eve and calm repose,
The placid stream still onward flows,
Until through age we dimly see
A glimmer of Eternity.

TO MY BABY BOY

Dewitt, my darling baby boy,
Has brought with him a world of joy,
His laughing eyes of heaven's blue
He stole from skies as he came through.
The love-light gleaming in his eyes,
Is starlight mixed with sweet surprise.
Such dreamy wisdom finds home there,
His smile makes all the world more fair.
His rosy lips like cherries are,
Slipped from some sacred garden far.
A dimple in his chin we trace,
Close by the smiling kissing place.
His lily fingers, wee pink hands,
No flowers rival from far lands.
So fragile, yet such perfect art,
To fill completely one fond heart!
Such chubby, tiny little feet,
Rose petals could not be more sweet.
Such little way from life's great door,
Just on the threshold where once more
The journey starts, as oft before.
The way must lead through hopes and fears;
What toll will take the passing years?
Now lying in my arms so sweet,
He only thinks he'll go to sleep.

Closed flower eyelids, down he goes,
See! he is hushed in sweet repose,
My arms close folding him tonight
We rest content in soft firelight.
Tell me my baby, drowsy eyes,
What dream see you beyond the skies?
What do you find in that fair clime,
In dreamland, O, sweet boy of mine?
The eyelids softly flutter, then
He sails in Dreamland's boat again.
I lay him gently down to sleep,
And know that angels vigil keep.

NATURE SLEEPS

Fierce and wild come Winter storms,
And gone are Autumn rains,
The frost engraves fantastic forms
Upon my window panes;
Clouds spread a great white winding-sheet
Upon the world below,
And piercing winds drive through the street
The fleecy flakes of snow.

The trees are bare, the leaves lie low
To shield the flowers fair,
The blossoms sleep beneath the snow,
Close-covered everywhere;
The pond and lake are frozen o'er,
Unseen the river's flow,
No wavelets play along the shore,
They're sleeping down below.

To sunny lands the birds have flown,
Their nests are full of snow,
Their songs hushed in oblivion,
And only caws the crow;
The squirrel has sought his Winter home
Within the hollow tree,
The honey bee clings to the comb,
A drowsy refugee.

Beyond the clouds the sun yet shines
From skies of peerless blue,
There is an end to all snow lines,
Though sometimes hid from view;
Beneath the ice the river creeps,
And shifts the shining sand,
The heart of Nature silence keeps
Beneath the snowy land.

THE QUIET HOUR

Down by the babbling brook,
Beyond the haunts of men,
I found a shady nook,
Within a peaceful glen.

'Twas in the pensive wood,
Among the stately trees,
Where in the solitude
My spirit was at ease.

The flowerets smiled on me
By millions, many more
Beyond those I could see
Had greeted me before.

A little bird came by
And bade me linger long,
That it might satisfy
Me with its blithesome song.

The trees told all they knew
Of secrets where they stood
The long, long ages through
In peaceful brotherhood.

Not once they frowned on me,
  But with a friendly smile
They let me plainly see
  To stay would be worth while.

A fragrant breeze came by,
  From out the South somewhere,
And whispered with a sigh,
  "The world is very fair."

When souls of men grow cold,
  From greed or worldy gain,
I seek these friends of old,
  To cheer my heart again.

THREE ROSES

'Twas in the month of June,
  Out by the morning road,
Where birds were all in tune
  And laughing waters flowed,
Three sister roses grew
Adorned with pearls of dew.

They swung there, all aglow,
  Touched by the morning sun,
White as the winter snow,
  But ere the day was done
No roses were in sight,
They all had vanished quite.

Upon a mother's grave,
  Beneath a willow tree,
Whose weeping branches wave
  And moan unceasingly,
One snow-white rose was laid
By hand of sad-eyed maid.

Another found its way
  Into a dusky room,
Where on a pillow lay,
  Within the silent gloom,
A mother's darling child,
With fever raging wild.

Upon a harlot's breast,
To catch the lustful eye,
Another found its rest,
Where revelry holds high,
And dim lights yellow shine
On cheeks red-tinged with wine.

FAR FROM THE CITY

Northward from the busy places
Where the crowds go surging on,
Stretch wide, green, inviting spaces
To the woodlands halycon.
There the shade is sweet and restful
'Neath some leafy spreading tree
That bends low to give a greeting
That's all kind, to you and me.

There the wind so lightly passes,
With all fragrant odors rife,
Creeping through the slender grasses,
Singing of a tranquil life.
Witching sunbeams play with roses
And the shadows 'neath the trees,
Nature's god serene reposes,
Mid these scenes of quiet ease.

Evermore the waves are lapping,
All along the peaceful shore,
And the busy birds are tapping
At the old dead sycamore.
Little throats are madly singing
Melodies the whole long day,
Trailing vines are climbing, clinging
To the trees in flowery spray.

This the place for nature-lovers,
Others wander blindly by,
Little guess that round them hovers
Blessings that can never die,
Theirs to have when work and worry,
Drives them to this beauty spot,
Where no greed, or strife, or hurry
Holds its own, with God forgot.

THE WOODS

I love the woods, the grand old woods,
The temples built with God's own hands,
The whisp'ring leaves, the nodding boughs
The murm'ring brook with shifting sands,
The moaning winds through leafy trees,
Which seem far as the surf and foam,
The strange and ghostly deep retreats,
Old as the world and sweet as dawn.

I love the woods, the wide wild woods,
Where oak and poplar side by side,
Where bittersweet and twisting vine
Twine round and high to tree-tops wide,
Where squirrels swing from limb to limb
And hurry to the verdant dome,
Where dwell the fox and sleepy owl,
Where screaming jaybirds make their home.

I sit beneath those greenwood trees,
And watch the shadows come and go,
I deeper in the forest tread
Among the stately trees, and lo!
Behold, long shady aisles I see,
And halls with frescoed ceiling high;
Then through the canopy o'erhead
I catch a glint of azure sky.

I rove along the rustic path,
Made by the Indians ages gone,
Which follows where their fancy led,
Down by the lake and then along
The hills, across the babbling brook,
Through hazel bushes here and there,
Around the rocks, among the trees,
And ending I can not tell where.

The ancient oak stands proud and high,
A monarch of the timber-land;
The red man's moccasin of old
Has made this trail I understand;
The White man's footsteps followed on:
But these are as the dust they trod,
But still the mighty oak bides on,
Bears witness of a living God.

THE BOY WHO ONCE WAS I

While coming up the way
  Along the steep incline,
My winding pathway lay
  By sturdy oak and pine.
A leaf brushed 'gainst my cheek,
A resting place 'twould seek.

Its magic touch and breath
  Brought visions to my mind
Of youth and age and death,
  And all that lies behind.
Dim in the distance lay
The vale of Yesterday.

A lad was there at play
  Near by the rippling rill,
Where golden sunlight lay
  Serene upon the hill.
The lad, the sky, the stream
Seemed all one lovely dream.

The boy looked up at me
  With eyes of wonderment,
Light-hearted, fancy-free,
  He surely seemed content
To spend the happy hours
Among the birds and flowers.

Nearby I saw a road
That seemed to lead below.
With eager steps I strode
To reach that Long-ago.
I thought to meet that boy
And taste once more his joy.

The gate was closed, Alas!
The gateman, old and gray,
Then said that I must pass
Along the other way.
My pleadings were in vain,
Said he, "No, ne'er again."

Then on again I strode,
Far up the steep incline,
Along the heavy road,
Beyond the oak and pine.
I waved a sad "Goodbye,"
To the lad who once was I.

VALEDICTION

The Indian wandered up the hill
And sat beneath the singing pine,
Near by the foaming, rushing rill,
The way his feet were wont to climb;
He sought the place where rests in peace
His faithful mate, beneath the trees.

Beneath the pines the needles spread
A golden carpet, smooth and fine,
A verdant roof they wove o'erhead;
Clambered the moss and wild woodbine
Over the mound and boulders near,
Within the rude enclosure drear.

The passing winds made low, sad moan
And swayed the branches of the pine,
A mournful dirge, in plaintive tone;
The Indian listening, sat supine.
He dreamed of forests far away,
Of his lost love beneath the clay.

He saw away beyond the bridge
And looking far as eye can see,
Low, rolling hills, ridge touching ridge,
Like billows of some restless sea.
Lost in the dim and distant blue
With secrets hidden no man knew.

His lone, sad heart was stirred within
By reaches vast of forest old,
By shifting light and shadows dim,
And patches fair of green and gold;
By cloud-ships calmly sailing by
To unknown ports beyond the sky.

He rose and drew close to the mound,
And sadly scanned the forest o'er—
For many years his hunting ground—
Then disappeared forevermore.
All others of his tribe had gone,
Sedate he left to follow on.

WHEN LEAVES LIE LOW

O hark! I hear a voice so clear,
That bids me seek the woods,
Where dead leaves lie and sad winds sigh
Through lonely solitudes.

A sun-flecked ridge, a rustic bridge,
A path that leads me far
Along the brook, by shady nook,
Where tangled thickets are.

The placid stream, just like a dream,
Flows gently now along
Its winding way, by night and day,
And sings its own sweet song.

Upon the brink I stand and think
How like the river's flow
Time bears us on, that soon we're gone
Where all the world must go.

How quiet now each bush and bough,
Where once was life and song,
How sad they seem, the wood and stream,
Where birds sang all day long.

The leaves let go their hold, then O
How gently down they glide!
The red and gold all turned to mould,
When scattered far and wide.

How calm they go to graves below,
With millions gone before;
A few more days and Autumn ways
Will close the mystic door.

A DREAM AT TWILIGHT

'Tis evening now, the day is done,
A breeze floats lightly by,
The setting sun, whose course is run,
Now richly paints the sky.
We're dreaming of the sunset West,
Far from the busy throng,
Again we see the mountain's crest
Where twilight lingers long.

The sky is blue, the plains are wide,
The wind is flowing free,
We're out to seek the joys that hide
Beyond the wide prairie.
We're weary of the rolling plain,
The rivers flow too slow,
We're out to seek the hills again,
Where rushing torrents flow.

Our eager eyes look to the height,
Where bald peaks upward rise
And eagles wing their steady flight
When fading daylight dies.
We see the downward rushing streams
Of waters crystal clear,
Where cascades leap and Nature dreams
Beneath the pine trees near.

We climb where many a boulder cleaves
And peace flows like the wind,
Where cares fall off like Autumn leaves
And gloom is left behind;
Where spectral shadows play at will,
From dawn till close of day,
And echoes float from hill to hill
Then faintly die away.

We sit upon the rocks near by
And watch the waters gleam,
We hear the gentle breezes sigh
Through stately pines, then dream
Of other mountains far away,
Beyond our vision keen,
Where torrents flow and shadows play
Beneath the evergreen.

INDIAN SUMMER

The halcyon days are past and gone,
The Indian Summer sun hangs low,
The golden Autumn days have come,
A crimson warms the afterglow.

The shocks of corn like wigwams stand
In dusky rows across the way,
Their banners flowing to the wind,
A sad farewell they seem to say.

The trees have cast their last leaves down,
To shield the flowers at their feet,
Have bared their naked breasts and arms
To battle with the winds and sleet.

The thistledown floats lightly by,
Like feathers from a flock of geese,
That sail serene on Southern seas
Where wintry winds can hold no lease.

The sky bends low to meet the dew,
The mist clouds rise to meet the sun,
O'er valleys hangs the hazy blue
When Indian Summer days have come.

Like gossamer spun the myriad lines
That lazily float the azure through
Weaving the shrouds for the dying year,
From limpid lights of rainbow hue.

And unseen hands fling wide the doors,
And bid me enter, to rest at ease,
Sailing, sailing supinely on,
Would all the days were days like these!

I visioned the wonderous sight
Of a city with pinnacles high.

I WANT TO GO BACK

E'en yesterday wandered I through
The wood, 'neath the evergreen trees,
Where mingled the pine and the yew
To sing and to sigh in the breeze;
I saw the swift river rush by
On its way to the far distant sea,
I watched the birds heavenward fly,
And dreamed of the days yet to be.

I visioned the wonderous sight
Of a city with pinnacles high,
I saw in the glimmering light
Where thousands of people went by;
'Twas the sedulous mart of the world,
The tide of humanity's stream;
I saw a great future unfurled
To me like a wonderful dream.

I followed my phantom and came
Where the stream of humanity flows;
I came to seek riches and fame,
But knew naught of sorrow and woes;
Where millions are made in a day,
By those who are "playing the game,"
Casting true joys away,
To harvest that bubble—a name.

But I'm weary of toil and care,
Of the city's grime and its dust
That's forever filling the air,
I shrink from its greed and its lust;
From the slums of the city's dark ways,
Where illness meets sorrow and pain,
And I shudder at human affrays,
I'd give worlds to go back again!

I'm turning once more to the blue,
And I'm longing again for the sigh
Of the wind through the pine and the yew,
Where mountains to heaven heave high;
I'm yearning again to retreat
To a peaceful greenwood that I know,
Far away from the throng of the street;
It's calling me—O let me go!

ETERNAL PEACE

When whispering winds at dewy eve
  Came creeping down the dusky way,
And breath of June was on the air,
  The world serene and peaceful lay
Beneath the Summer sun or clouds;
  Far-spreading fields of waving grain
Shone brightly in the morning dew
  Or nodded in the sun and rain.

The peaceful river silent crept
  Adown the valley, through the plain,
By castles old and lowly huts,
  Until it reached the restless main
Where great white fleets at anchor lay
  Like sleeping swans upon the sea;
Rocked by the billows of the deep,
  They rose and fell unceasingly.

From ancient towers the deep-toned bells
  Rang vesper psalms when day was done,
And shadows slowly eastward crept,
  As stars awakened one by one;
Along the busy, crowded streets
  A multitude of toilers went
Their quiet way, no thought had they
  Of aught but plenty and content.

But direful change now marks the place,
The golden fields of waving grain
By mighty armies have been mown
Until the're all one bloody plain;
The morning sun is greeted now
By clouds of battle smoke and shell,
The deaf'ning roar of heavy guns
Again repeats that "War is Hell!"

The ancient towers now ruined stand
In silhouette against the sky,
And spectral shadows linger near
Where torn and ghastly corpses lie;
The waves of grief like mountains roll,
And storms of trouble fiercely beat
Against despairing human souls
That know not whither to retreat.

O bird of peace, come back again,
From out thy secret hiding place,
Dispell the storm and darksome might,
Come messenger of peace and grace!
O banish far the god of war,
And spread thy broad wings over all
This wide, wide world, from sea to sea,
Until we hear the Master's call.

WHEN AUTUMN CALLS

The voice of Autumn is calling me,
I hear it whisper far and near,
The brook, the birds and crimsoning tree
All are beckoning, "Come and see!"

The golden rod upon the hill
Flaunts her plumes in the morning breeze,
The bees are seeking their honeyed fill
Ere Winter files his long, hard lease.

The flaming sumach decks the hill,
Like tapestry the crisp brown grass,
And sings in minor note the rill
Beneath the crimson sassafras.

The spring winds gave these vernal birth,
The frost their glory did bestow,
The chilling winds have stilled their mirth,
Soon all will sleep beneath the snow.

The deadened branches criss-cross lie,
Entwined with many a twist and crook,
Brambles and briars, rank and high,
Grow 'long the edge of winding brook.

The thistledown is drifting low,
  Sowing its seed for another year,
Floating like fleecy flakes of snow
  Over the meadows brown and sear.

Suddenly starts the whirring quail,
  Swiftly she flies beyond the hill,
Out leaps a frightened cotton-tail,
  Then hides beneath the ruined mill.

O man of wealth, you have your gold,
  Your mansions vast with gilded halls,
But give to me the wood and wold,
  That I may harken when Autumn calls!

THE RIVER

From a crevice in the mountain
Bubbles forth a little fountain,
Pure and clean.
Down the hillside lightly tripping,
'Neath the willows softly slipping,
Quite unseen,
Quick it hurries over pebbles,
Sings in minors and in trebles,
Through the shadow and the sheen.

Then between the banks so narrow,
Speeding forward like an arrow
From a bow;
Faster flowing, louder splashing,
Fiercer, wilder, downward dashing
It will go,
Rushing round the rocks projecting,
To the right and left deflecting;
So the wilder waters flow.

Then again more slowly flowing,
Like a mirror shadows showing
Of the trees,
In the water brightly gleaming,
Like inverted forest seeming,
Roguish breeze
To the trembling leaves is telling
Of the wonders far down dwelling,
Where the river flows at ease.

Deep within its bosom hidden
Tragic secrets never written
On a scroll,
Float adown the silent river,
Known by only God, the Giver
Of the soul,
He who guides the river's bending
From its source to final ending
At the sea where billows roll.

* * * * * *

When the sun is low descending
And my life is near its ending
May it be
Like the river's tranquil flowing
On its last stretch homeward going
To the sea;
Calmly, gently drifting, drifting,
'Till the mystic shadows lifting
Show to me Eternity.

TIME'S PRISONER

Time bade me step within the door,
To search the realms of mystery;
But, turning back, I stand before
The portals of past history.
I try the door, it will not give,
I rap, I beg, but soon I learn
That I am but a fugitive,
And never more I may return.

Across the narrow hall I see
Another door, Futurity,
This side of that which is to be;
I hurry there, but woe is me,
'Tis but another bolted door;
I loudly knock, there's no reply,
Grim silence only, nothing more,
My anxious fears intensify.

With trembling hope I venture near
A window where the light steals through,
But find I cannot pass out here,
Since Father Time has barred this, too.
Between the bars I look and see
The Deathless Past go speeding on,
Until beyond dim memory
'Tis lost in dark oblivion.

There's no retreat, my sad heart learns,
All is a vision that has been,
My soul for fuller knowledge yearns,
But I may never enter in.
I'm locked within these unseen walls,
The Past is only history,
I ask the Future, silence falls,
The Present has imprisoned me!

NOVEMBER DAYS

From the city I wander
To the naked woods yonder,
Then down by the river
Where willow wands quiver,
I dreamily ponder.

Far away is the swallow,
Soon flowers will follow,
The woods are all quiet,
No birds there in riot,
On hill or in hollow.

The green is now fading,
And dull is the shading,
The Fall winds are lazy,
And landscapes are hazy,
While Winter is waiting.

The hillside is blue in
The distance, the ruin
Of Summer is passing,
And leaves are amassing
In forest they grew in.

I hear the Days saying:
"We can not be staying,
The year is fast going,
And soon 'twill be snowing
Where now we are straying."

SUNSET BEYOND THE LAKE

A picturesque log cabin stands
Vine-clad, upon the beach,
A panoramic view commands
A wide extending reach;
To southward, dim blue distances,
To westward, lies the lake,
Far northward hills of dreaminess
Rise upward from the lake.

A few cloud islands floating high,
Rose-hued and rimmed with gold,
A heron slowly drifting by
Out near the western wold.
From bending reed a blackbird's cry
Comes floating down the air,
Borne on a whisper breeze, a sigh
From some Elysian fair.

Rapt glory of the sunset skies,
Out by the western gate,
When fading daylight softly dies
And shadows silent wait!
Along the shore the glassy sheen
Reflects the crimson glow,
And visions of the trees are seen
Suspended down below.

Rapt glory of the sunset skies,
Out by the western gate.

Before its final plunge the sun
  Has changed its disc of gold
To one of rose, ere day is done;
  Then twilight skies unfold
A brilliant sunset curtain there,
  A painting seldom seen
Save when Nature paints on air
  A gorgeous sunset scene.

And thus the glorious sun goes down,
  While shadows silent creep
Athwart the lake and hillside brown,
  'Till all the sunbeams sleep.
The silver sickle of the moon
  Hangs low against the sky,
Somewhere from out the dusk a loon
  Sends forth its weird cry.

I watch the day-flush leave the sky,
  Ere night comes in its wake,
I muse and sadly breathe a sigh,
  While darkness hides the lake.
To passing day I say goodbye,
  While dimmer grows the light,
And evening shuts the door and I
  Bid welcome to the night.

THE CONFLICT

Will the dreary rain ne'er cease,
The raging torrent be at peace,
A staying hand the shadow lift
Revealing heaven through the rift?

Just yesternight the stars looked down
Upon the peaceful, happy town,
The lights shone forth from ev'ry side
Upon the flood of human tide.

The river, peaceful, flowed along
Beneath the bridge and busy throng,
In easy curves it onward rolled,
While chime of bells the hour told.

The moonbeams danced upon the stream,
Like visions of a happy dream,
A benediction seemed they like
Upon the homes beyond the dyke.

Today the swiftly flowing tide
Against man's work its power tried,
It hurled itself with awful might,
Both rain and river made their fight.

Terrific, wild, the battle raged,
'Tween man and roaring waters staged,
Fiercer and stronger came the tide,
Rushing o'er ramparts far and wide.

The victors carried death and gloom,
Helpless victims hurled to doom,
No power of human hand could stay
The elements engaged in fray.

A winding sheet they made of snow,
And spread it o'er the fields below.
Then darkness came upon the wave,
And all was silent as the grave.

MY FRIEND

As a boy, when turning the sod,
  Or hoeing the corn and the cane,
I implicitly trusted in God,
  A personal God, and humane,
Who'd lead me and show me the road,
And help me to carry my load.

Then later I banished Him quite,
  As a personal being like man,
I banished Him out of my sight,
  Not knowing the universe plan.
One morning I found Him again,
Thereafter my friend to remain.

That morning while roaming the street
  I came to the house of the Lord,
And entered, expecting to meet
  His people in friendly accord;
Dame Fashion was there in her pride,
But I saw not the Lord at her side.

From the Bible the minister read
  Of the future abode of the soul,
Expounding his sermon he said:
  "The pious man's ultimate goal
Will be with the merciful God,
But not till he's under the sod."

The sound of sweet music I heard,
From organ and orchestra there,
But sweeter the voice of a bird
Floated in from a tree-top so fair,
Inviting me out to a world
Where Nature her glories unfurled.

From the temple I wandered alone
To the brink of a river near by,
And found there the friend of my own
Free choosing, whom others passed by;
Together we roamed over hills,
Through meadows and by sparkling rills.

Since then I have known Southern skies,
Have looked on the blue rolling sea,
Have watched o'er the plains the sunrise,
And have learned of strange wonders
that be,
I have sounded the depths of life's deep,
I have climbed pathways rugged and steep.

But never alone have I gone,
'Long pathway all dark or all fair,
Nor missed I the light of the morn,
For my true friend has ever been there.
Through sunshine and shadow we two
To each other have ever been true.

Our house of devotion? The woods,
The carolling birds for a choir,
Thus roaming the sweet solitudes
The heart found its fondest desire.
And peace was at home where we trod,
My friend and companion was God.

WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN

A path of liquid gold leads far
Across the lake to where
The water meets the sandy bar;
Upon the evening air
Sweet odors come across the bay,
I idly musing stand
And watch the passing of the day
Beyond the sunset land.

Among the rushes near an old
Canoe lies on its side,
Black water beetles manifold
Around the ruins glide.
Upon a bending willow wand
A red-winged blackbird swings,
The swallows dip and fly beyond
The lake, on buoyant wings.

A swell comes gently by the boat
And writes upon the sand,
Erasing first what others wrote
Upon the shelving strand;
And oh, what memories it brings
Of days that are no more,
Of sunny hillsides, flowing springs,
And waves that lapped the shore!

I hear the dip of oars and swish
Of waves against the boat,
And standing there I longing wish
That I again might float
Upon the dreamy waves of youth,
When all the world was fair,
And I knew only golden truth,
And naught of worldly care.

A heron rises from the brake,
Quite near to where I stand;
My vision's gone, I'm wide awake!
Around me lies the sand,
The golden path across the lake
Is gone, has vanished quite,
My weary way I homeward take,
As slowly fades the light.

The Surf

SONG OF THE SEA

Surf of the sea
You sing to me
Of wild winds going by
Where lonely islands lie,
Rock-ribbed and bleak
From shore to peak.

O, sing to me
A melody
Of where the winds are mild
And oft the sunshine smiled
Upon the hills
And rushing rills.

Let airs arise
With sweet surprise,
And float far up the hill,
Through singing pines until
Your echoes seem
A dream, sweet dream.

Some early dawn
When I pass on
Beyond the sunset sea,
Sing softly then to me,
Of life and light
Beyond the night.

LIFE

Like Autumn leaves we're cast upon
The passing stream of years,
Which flows forever on and on,
And ends in vale of tears.

Serene we drift through eddies smooth,
Along the sunny shore
Of childhood and of happy youth,
As millions have before.

We glide into the broader stream
Of joy and hope and love,
Whose hazy shores seem like a dream,
Where blue skies bend above.

We pass into the swirling tide
Of selfishness and gain,
Where seething waters swiftly glide
Out toward the restless main.

Now on the billows of success
Triumphantly we ride,
Then down we plunge to worldliness,
Where vales of sorrow hide.

Beyond this world again we drift,
To ne'er again return,
The veil between will never lift,
No more life's spark will burn.

Unseen our spirits upward rise,
Like mists above the wave,
The human soul that never dies,
Goes not down to the grave.

NIGHT IN THE WOOD

Oft comes a call
  At night from the wood
Bidding me come
  To its deep solitude.

Moonbeams are kind,
  Leading me on,
Deep in the dark,
  Then they are gone.

Strange shadows there
  By the old log,
Firefly lamps
  Lighting the bog.

The hoot of an owl,
  Calling its mate
Out of the wild,
  Sounds desolate.

Night and the wood
  Are kind to me,
They are so still,
  So pure and free.

MY DESIRE

I never loved the streets,
  With walls up-looming,
Nor somberness that greets
  Me in the glooming.

I love the arch of blue
  Above me blending,
The green, the wide world through,
  That's never ending.

I want the wooded glade,
  By hill or mountain,
The cool refreshing shade
  Down by the fountain.

I want to climb the hills,
  To do my rhyming,
Up where my vision thrills
  Me for my climbing.

O, let the sunlight through
  The blue, wide spreading,
To kiss the morning dew
  Where I am treading.

I'll take my way along
A path of flowers
And listen to the song
Of birds for hours.

I want to roam until
I reach life's closing,
And then upon some hill
To be reposing.

THE CHRYSALIS

Abiding in the shades of night
Within a sealed and silent tomb,
Where ne'er a ray of welcome light
Steals in to drive away the gloom,
Within this sunless chamber dark
There sleeps a lifeless, listless thing,
It wears no sign of beauty's mark,
But there life's germ is smouldering,
Awaiting vernal Spring,
For its awakening,
When it will fly
In yon blue sky,
On light and airy wing.

All powers of darkness can not stay
Its coming at the call of Spring,
'Twill burst its tomb, from lifeless clay
'Twill wake to birth with gaudy wing;
A thing of beauty, glad and free,
'Twill sail above the velvet lawn,
A floating flower of revelry
As lovely as the morning's dawn,
On light wing debonair,
'Twill wander here and there,
Like mystic dreams
Its beauty seems,
When floating in the air.

Then over garden, through the hedge,
Into the meadow, down the vale,
Among wild roses, over sedge,
Through spreading treetops it will sail,
Nor pause to rest but seek the sun,
As meant for naught but light and air,
Its course in ardent rapture run,
With all the world a garden fair;
We watch its roving flight
To dim and dizzying height,
And higher yet to go,
And fainter grow
Until 'tis lost to sight.

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE

The dusky shadows of the night
Are settling over town,
A random snowflake in its flight
Comes drifting slowly down;
Then many more come floating by,
On light and airy wing
From out the gloomy, sunless sky,
On winds scarce whispering.

Large and fluffy flakes they are,
That look like swarming bees
As they come falling from afar,
To street and roof and trees.
A shroud they weave the dying year,
Then spread it on with pride,
And wrap the world, both far and near,
Its gloominess to hide.

The year is slipping fast away,
The midnight hour is near,
When those who love draw close and say,
"Here comes another year!"
The old year's gone, forever gone,
'Tis midnight now, and clear
The stars of heaven look down upon
The joyous, glad New Year.

I LOVE THE TRAIL

I love the trail, the quiet trail,
That leads me far, and true,
To silent, dusky twilight vale,
'Mongst hillside scenes anew,
Where Nature charms and cradles me
To dreaming of the days
When roads were only trails and we
Light-hearted were always.

The trial that leads me by the stream
Where bending boughs bend low,
Reflecting in the water's gleam
Their shadows down below,
Thence upward winds to eminence,
To where my view commands
A broad expanse, a sight immense,
Way out to shadow lands.

More wealth have I than greedy men
Who strive for gold and gain,
God's mine of wealth I seek, for then
I'll never seek in vain.
The air is mine, the birds are mine,
Their songs are given me;
So are the clouds and bright sunshine,
No matter where I be.

I love the trail, the lonely trail
That leads me on again
Beyond the haunts of men who rail
About their worldly gain.
Give me instead the winding ways
Where sun and shadows fall
Along my pathway, all my days;
I count this wealth 'bove all!

THE VANISHING RACE

A solemn silence reigned supreme
O'er all the continent,
Except the lilting of a stream,
Or call of bird that sent
Its note along the forest aisle,
Or music of the breeze
When touching vibrant chords awhile
Among the leafy trees.

Unnumbered geese their harrow drew
Above the western plain,
Where rank and high the grasses grew,
Nursed by the sun and rain;
Like hurricane the bisons swept
Across the prairies lone,
Then all again in silence slept
Where dim the moonlight shone.

God-silenced peaks rose to the sun,
Capped by eternal snow,
When twilight fell and day was done
The rushing river's flow
Made music where the rocks were rent
Asunder ages gone,
And roaring waters turbulent
Forever hurried on.

A weary, wandering, dying race,
That soon will be no more.

The smoke of council fires rose
Above the ancient trees,
The Indian wandered where he chose,
No red man held his lease
Upon this wide, wide continent,
'Twas all the red man's land,
From rushing rivers turbulent
Down to the ocean sand.

When rose the mist one early dawn,
Down by the southern sea,
Three ships at anchor lay upon
The swells, triumphantly.
They to the Indian visions seemed,
As there they rose and fell
Upon the waves, he never dreamed
That they would sound his knell.

From o'er the sea the white man came,
With scant regard for right,
He came in search of wealth and fame,
His only law was might.
He swiftly swept the forests down,
For avarice and gain,
Up sprang the gleaming lights of town,
And waving fields of grain.

And ever toward the west they strode,
The red man and the white,
Along the dark and bloody road
That led to many a fight.
The white man followed fast upon
The campfires of the red,
Whose dying embers lit the dawn
For progress' mighty tread.

The highways blended with the trail,
Across the western plains,
Then soon along the shining rails
Came rushing mighty trains;
Great iron steeds went shrieking by,
Out to the Golden Gate,
Where on the crimson sunset sky
Was writ the red man's fate.

He's fading like the morning mist
Before the Summer sun,
'Tis hopeless for him to resist
The white man's brain and gun;
Forever driven from place to place,
On to the western shore,
A weary, wandering, dying race
That soon will be no more.

NOCTURNE

The river is lapping the sand
By the shelving shore,
Near a path that's leading me on
Through shadowy ways;
The sough of the wind I hear
Like the far away sea.
The dome of heaven is hung
With lanterns of stars
That sparkle and twinkle up there
In the deep blue void.
The hoot of an owl I hear
Far off to the south;
All else is silence and awe,
Save the bay of a hound
That howls at the face of the moon
That's watching me from
The silvery hills of a cloud,
There, away to the east.
Solemn and vast lies before me
The slumbering world.

BY FANCY PAINTED

I'm in my hut alone tonight
Where all is dark, except the light
That steals in through the half-closed door,
Where moonbeams fall upon the floor.
My eyes see not and yet I see
A landscape most appealingly.
Upon a hill not high, not far,
The singing pines about me are;
To east it slopes, to vale below,
Where deeper shadows come and go;
Then farther down the foothills be
That heave like billows of the sea,
Until they meet the bending sky
Far out where lonely prairies lie.
A stream comes to my view and then
Is lost, but found to lose again.
The pensive beauty of those hills
Enthralls me with a joy that fills
My very soul with rapture sweet,
Thus making life seem more complete.
To westward, toward the sunset sky,
Imposing peaks point heaven high.

I stand and gaze up at the height
Where snowy crests gleam on my sight;
A gorgeous painting I behold,
There by the sunset gates of gold!
There is an air about those heights
That charms my inner self and lights
The chambers of my weary soul
To seeking hence a higher goal.
My mood of exultation thrills
My purer, inner self and fills
My mind with thoughts without alloy.
And all the seriousness of joy.
I want to think, to freely breathe
The inspiration there beneath
Those noble peaks that kiss the sky
Where sunset's splendor's loath to die.
I want to dream, to be alone,
Where Silence speaks in undertone.
I gaze on forest depths below,
Then up to where the heavens glow,
I view the hazy, solemn heights
While passing day in glory lights
The splendor of the mountain tops.

A light tap at my cabin door,
The won'drous landscape is no more!

THE PASSING OF WINTER

There is a sound beneath the ground
  Where sleep the lowly flowers,
They feel the rays of sunny days
  Or hear the welcome showers
That come to call them, one and all,
  To crown this world of ours.

Each day the sun his course will run
  Across the heavens higher,
And drive the cold from out the wold
  As Spring is drawing nigher.
Chill days must go, and this we know,
  When Winter winds retire.

Some early dawn will burst upon
  My sight a wond'rous glory
Of bird on wing and winds that bring
  Death to old Winter hoary.
Then up the stream like golden gleam
  Will swiftly dart the dory.

The joys of earth will spring to birth
  On hillside and in hollow,
I think of then how down the glen
  Will swiftly sweep the swallow,
And how I long for wood and song,
  Those brighter days to follow!

WHEN TWILIGHT COMES

When twilight gathers on the hills,
  Descends upon the quiet woods,
Dark vistas of the forest gloom
  Are peopled then with phantom moods.
The daylight fades and shadows creep,
  The stars come out, the moon rides by,
They tell of darkness deeper still,
  While o'er the leaves the night-winds
    sigh.

From forest depths and mountain side
  Come myriad voices of the night
To softly blend with evening hymn
  That floats to nearby dusky height.
Clear above these low-breathed tones
  Comes plaintive call of whip-poor-will,
The bats like ghostly spirits flit
  Among the trees on yonder hill.

Gone are the brook and forest aisles,
  The woodland music, leaf and bird,
Close in a city my heart yearns
  For Nature's voices once oft heard,
To roam once more in forest shade.
  Far from the turmoil to abide,
To sleep at last by river's brink,
  Or 'neath the trees on loved hillside.

DAYS OF YOUTH

O Days of Youth, O Days of Youth,
Long since you have passed by,
I dream of you by day and night,
And breathe for you a sigh,
For drifting far you are more dear
As shining stars on high
More radiant seem though far away,
More treasured than if nigh.

O Days of Youth, bright days of Youth,
I long for you tonight,
Come back to me from the dim past,
Turn back, O stop your flight;
Bring back those care-free happy hours,
Green fields and babbling brook,
And all the other priceless joys
With dreaming days you took.

O Days of Youth, past Days of Youth,
When memory bids me look
I see the hills and meadows green
Beyond where runs the brook;
The trees glassed in its tranquil flow,
And still beyond, the lake,
Where dips and curves the graceful swift,
And ducks glide midst the brake.

O Days of Youth, glad Days of Youth,
There are no flowers now
That bloom as fair as they did then;
In orchard every bough
Gave forth rare perfume not found since,
A myriad flowers then
Spread o'er the woodland, hill and field,
Made Paradise of fen.

O Days of Youth, blithe Days of Youth,
I hear, or seem to hear
The cricket and the katydid
In shady thicket near;
No music now is half so sweet
As this, and song of bird,
Before you left and took with you
The sweetest music heard.

O Days of Youth, flown Days of Youth,
They're gone, forever gone!
They heeded not my plaintive call,
But drifted calmly on
Like shadows of a lovely dream
I never more shall see,
Except in dreamy visions dim,
Dead days so dear to me!

AUTUMN

O Autumn, bringing with you death
And sadness—for all things must die!
You lightly touch with magic breath
The fields, the woods and pathless sky;
The maple trees are burning bright,
The poplars wear a crown of gold,
A whisper wind comes very light
And bids the leaves let go their hold.

O twilight of the dying year,
When golden dreams again set sail
From out the tremulous atmosphere,
And languor's fine-spun velvet veil
Lifts to reveal a heavenly bower,
When lonely silence fills the wood,
With here and there an exile flower
Where once a thousand comrades stood.

No longer sing the merry birds
From leafy bough and tangled brake,
The breeze is writing liquid words
Upon the surface of the lake
That in the writing quickly sink
Into the shadows of the deep,
The passes onward toward the brink
And bids the lilies "Go to sleep."

O twilight of the dying year,
When golden dreams again set sail.

O give me Autumn's pensive haze,
When wakes again some olden dream,
A golden thread through all the days,
A song that's sung by lake and stream.
O Autumn beautiful, sublime
That I might thy companion be,
While drifting down the stream of Time,
Until I'd reach the endless sea!

I DREAM OF YOU

Deep azure eyes and auburn hair,
A bosom like the lilies fair,
  Adorned with gleaming pearls,
A heart divine and ever true,
I dream of you, love, often do,
  When morn the day unfurls.

When brambles bearing load of care
Spring 'long my pathway everywhere,
  When threat'ning clouds hang low,
When thoughtless hand blots out the blue,
I dream of you, love, yes I do,
  When all seems dark below.

As through this weary world I roam,
Now near, now far away from home,
  Throughout the country wide,
Or when I'm sailing on the blue,
I dream of you, love, ever true,
  While drifting with the tide.

When twilight fades and winds repose,
And clouds are tinted like a rose,
  Comes sadness uncontrolled,
And brings fond memories of you,
I dream of you then, yes I do,
  A sunny dream all gold.

SADLY I PONDER

How sadly I ponder
When gazing at yonder
Rich forest leaves turning
And flaming and burning
The Autumn sky under.

The wild wold is calling
Me down where the falling
Leaves rustle and scatter,
I hear the birds chatter
Where bluejays are calling.

Now gone are the lilies,
Way down where the rill is
Asleep 'neath the ruin
Of grassed, and blue in
The distance the hill is.

A mild breeze is blowing,
While thistles are sowing
Their seed in the lowlands
On guard every tree stands;
How soon 'twill be snowing!

PRAIRIE LANDS

The glories of the plains of old,
  Like that of Ichabod are gone,
Save in the far Northwest, we're told,
  Are miles of prairies stretching on.

A land ne'er trod by hoof iron-shod,
  Nor touched by steel of plow or hoe;
True prairie grass above the sod,
  Is waving ever to and fro.

Within those grand old hills, away
  Beyond the dim horizon blue,
Are dreams held of another day,
  When all the world was wild and new.

When western heavens were aflame,
  And slowly went the red sun down,
The bison by the thousands came,
  Like warriors bold, in black and brown.

The frightened deer or antelope,
  With gray wolves fast upon their trail,
Came rushing down the bracken slope,
  Through shadows dim and moonlight pale.

In Spring was heard the rush of wings
Of water-fowl, by marsh and bay,
Like far and distant thundering
Before a storm on Summer's day.

The beaver built in creek or lake,
The sly fox prowled along the shore,
The prairie-hen rose from the brake,
Those distant days that are no more.

Eternal change, as years roll on,
The bison, wolf and timid deer
Have vanished, are forever gone,
Far, far beyond those prairies sere.

The ceaseless winds forever flow
Across the dreamy landscape there,
They wave the tall grass to and fro
As though in search of treasurer rare.

For many changeless miles they come
Across the plains, with odors rare
Of grasses, flowers and resin-gum,
Then pass on to we know not where.

The thought comes to us as we scan
The land brave pioneers trod,
"How insignificant is man,
How absolute the might God!"

WHEN LIFE IS DONE

Low in the West
The crimson sun
Is passing now,
The day is done.

Oft have I watched
The sunset die
Beyond the hills
As night drew nigh.

How many more
Years will it be,
Before its course
Has run for me?

What will betide
Twixt now and days
When last I'll see
Its dying rays?

I do not care,
I would not know
I only would
That I might go

Serenly like
The sinking sun,
As I pass out
When life is done.

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